

**"I would say, it is best to  
have a Personal Librarian":  
using qualitative and quantitative  
data to assess success**

**Jennifer Thiessen  
Elizabeth Yates**

**James A. Gibson Library, Brock University**  
**[brocklibrary1styearpersonallibrarian.wordpress.com](http://brocklibrary1styearpersonallibrarian.wordpress.com)**

# Outcomes

- Characteristics of Brock Personal Librarian program
- Advantages and challenges of assessment methods including:
  - Online surveys
  - Participation metrics
  - Email marketing metrics
- Strategic assessment ideas



# A bit about Brock ...

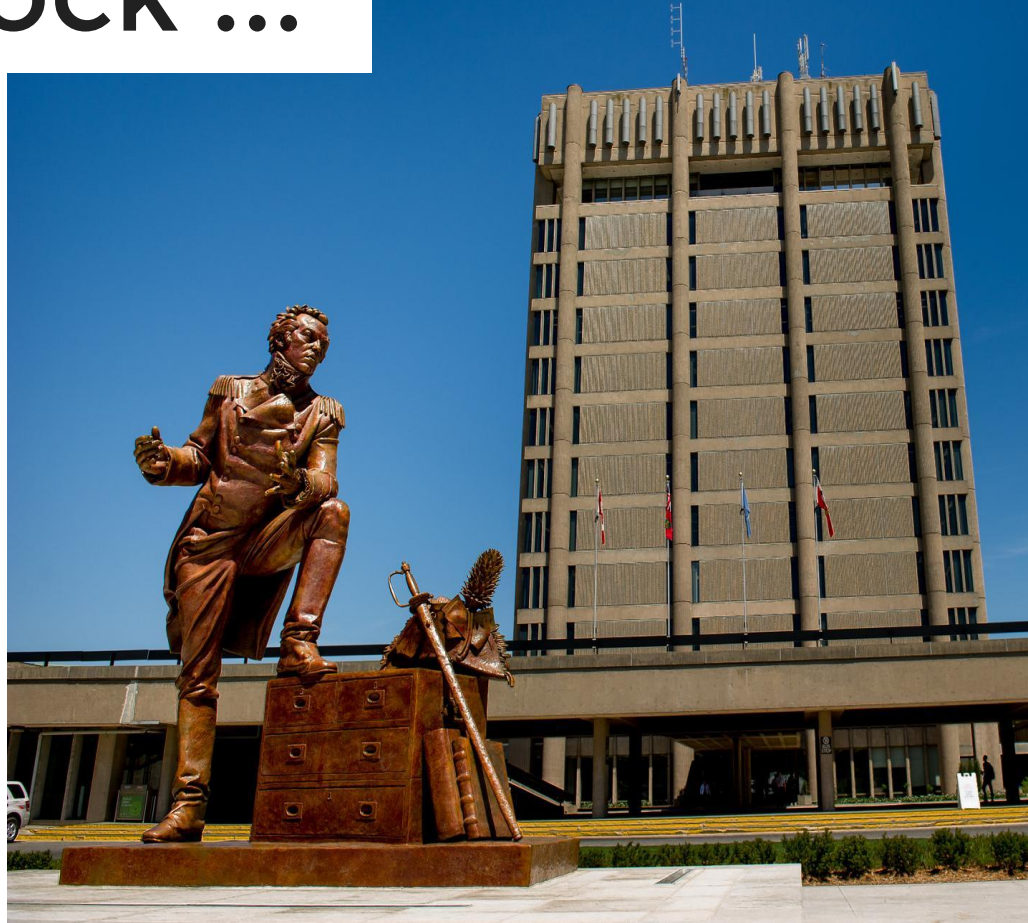
St. Catharines, ON

Young, growing, dynamic

18,500 students,  
including 1600 grads

6,000 first-year students  
(4,000 new to Brock)

No first-year integration  
program



# James A. Gibson Library

Liaisons for all programs;  
11 librarians with  
liaison roles

High librarian:student  
ratio

No cash :-)





# Personal Librarian program

James A. Gibson Library

2015-16:  
9 librarians [opt-in]  
29 programs/depts  
3,045 students  
Mostly undergrad

SERVICES COLLECTIONS HELP COPYRIGHT FEEDBACK



## Your Personal Librarian

Pictured above L to R: Linda Lowry, John Dingle, Marcie Jacklin, Elizabeth Yates, Heather Whipple, Colleen Mackinnon, Justine Cotton, Karen Bordonaro. Not pictured: Jennifer Thiessen, Michael Carrigan, Lydia Thorne.

## What is the Personal Librarian Program?

The Personal Librarian program is designed to introduce students entering Brock University to the many resources, tools and services available through the Library. Students in select programs will be contacted by their personal librarian occasionally throughout the year.

## Quick Search

Quick search

in SuperSearch ▼

# Nuts and bolts

3-person planning team

Partners:

Registrar's office

Brock Marketing &  
Communications

3 messages/term



Image: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nut\\_\(hardware\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nut_(hardware))

# Assessing success

Are we achieving planned outcomes?

Decreasing student anxiety

Enhancing use of library  
services and resources

How assess?

Survey

Tracking replies



Created by Designify.me  
from Noun Project

# Surveys

Linked in last April message

Mix of qualitative & quantitative questions

Pool of 360 responses over two years

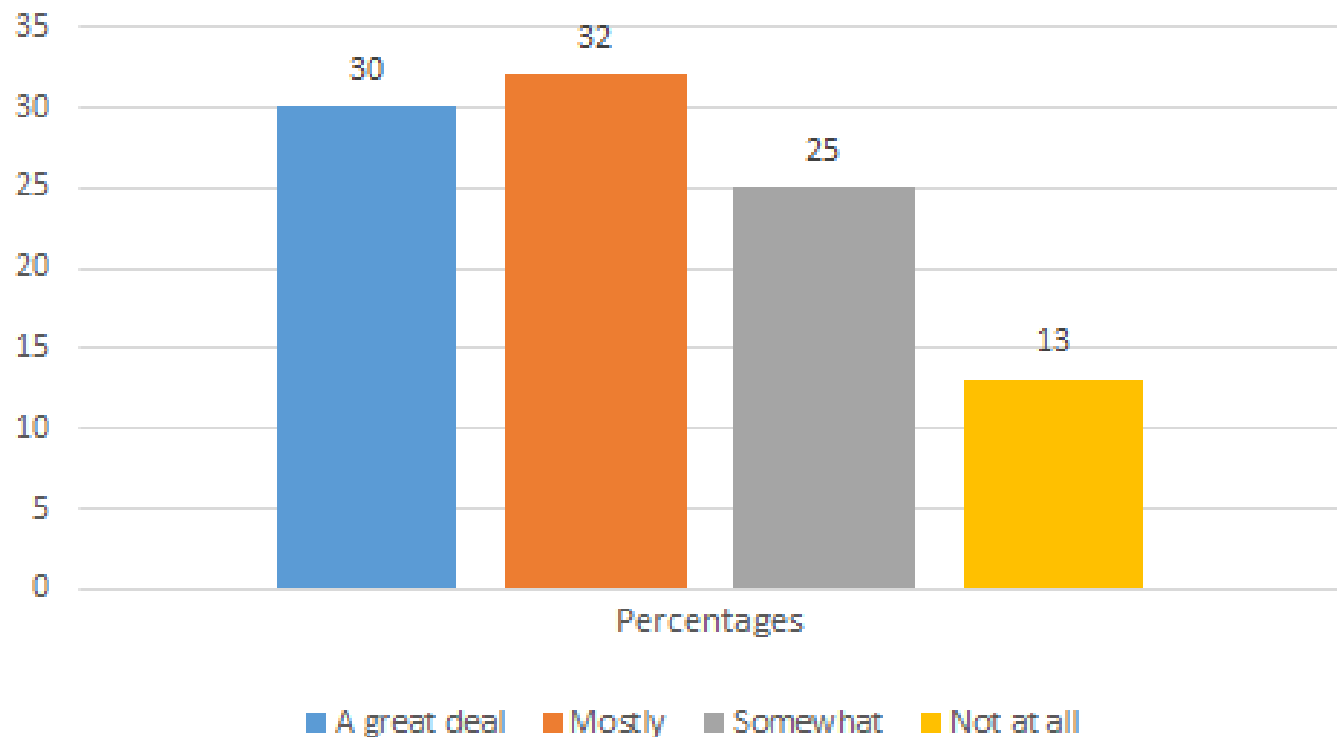
2 x \$25 prizes

2014-15 - 93 responses - response rate of 7%

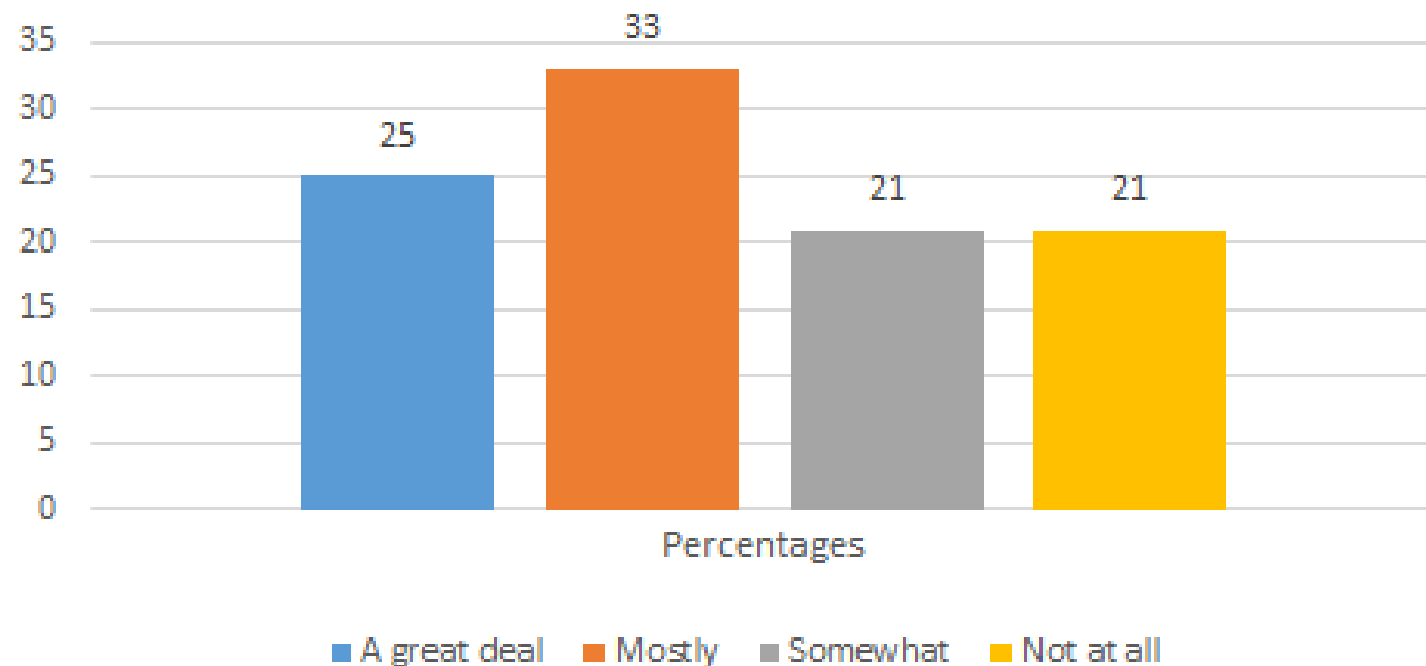
2015-16 -- 267 responses - response rate of 9%



## Having a Personal Librarian increased my confidence using Brock Libraries

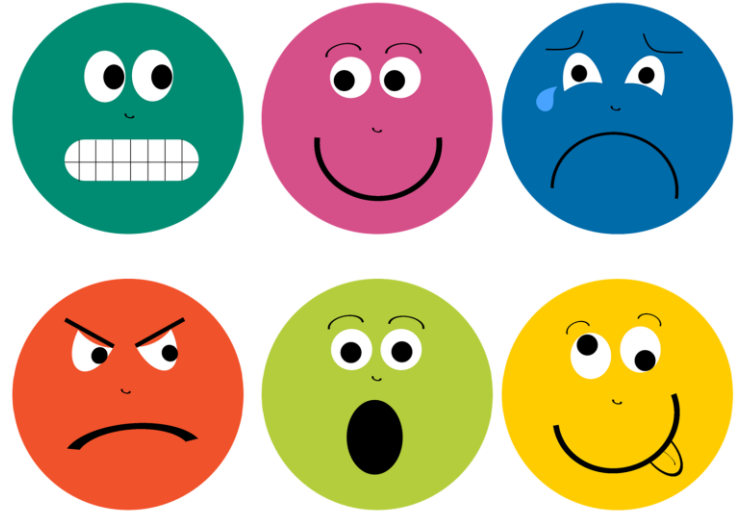


## Having a Personal Librarian eased my transition to university



# Qualitative data

capture descriptive data  
gain deeper  
understanding  
identify gaps/  
opportunities



# Decrease student anxiety?

“[my PL] was super friendly, so that always helped!”

“She has made me feel welcome to seek her advice.”

“I love the librarian”

“...provided a wonderful and important overview...and **I gained more confidence**”

“...comfortable...”

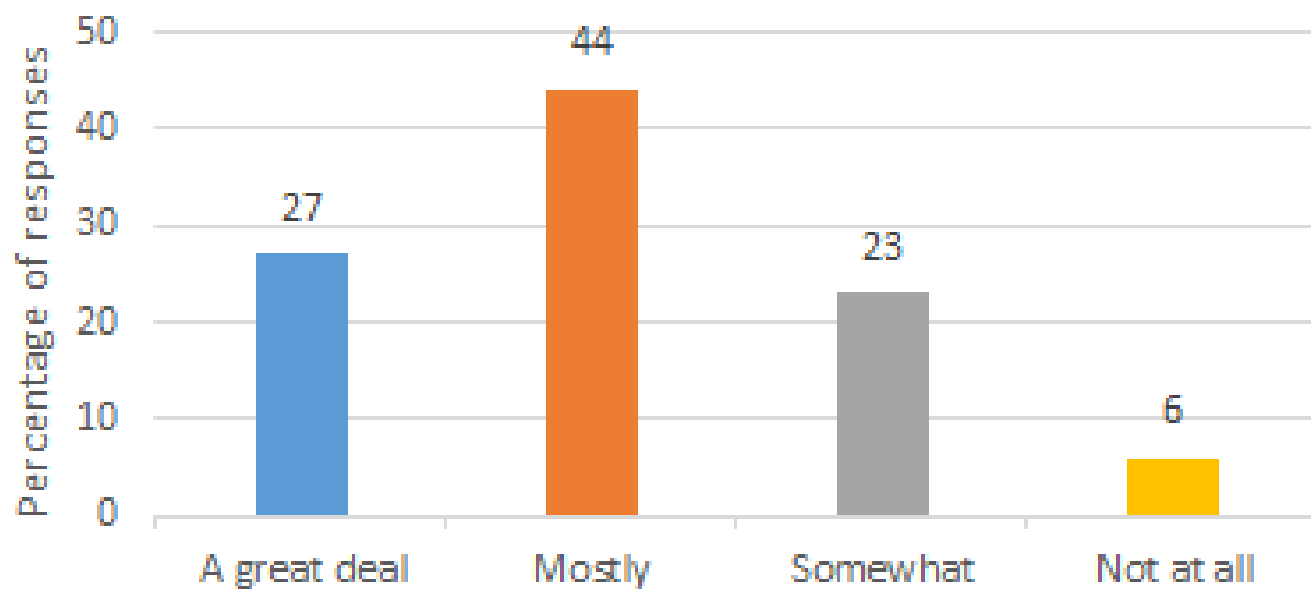
“...confident...”

“**I know so much more than I did before!**”



Created by Shreya Chakravarty  
from Noun Project

## Emails from my Personal Librarian were helpful



# Are emails helpful/optimal?

“I already get a lot of e-mails from other services at Brock. **At least the ones from the library are usually helpful.**”

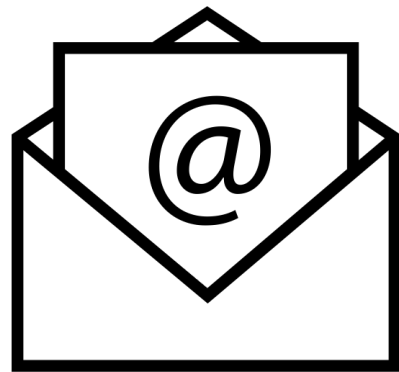
“...easiest and quickest way...”

“...no pressure...”

“...made it easier to know what was going on in the library”

Some:

Nope, just deleted the emails.

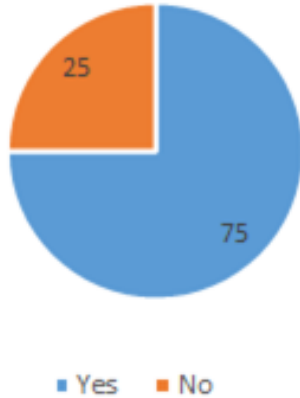


Created by Lorena Salagre  
from Noun Project



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Having a Personal Librarian introduced me to  
library services and/or resources  
that I didn't know about



1. SuperSearch
2. Library website
3. Silent or quiet study areas
4. Exams from previous years
5. Group study room

# What did we miss?

**Are there other services/resources you would have liked to hear about? [2015-16]**

Most responses: “No. She gave me all the information I needed.”

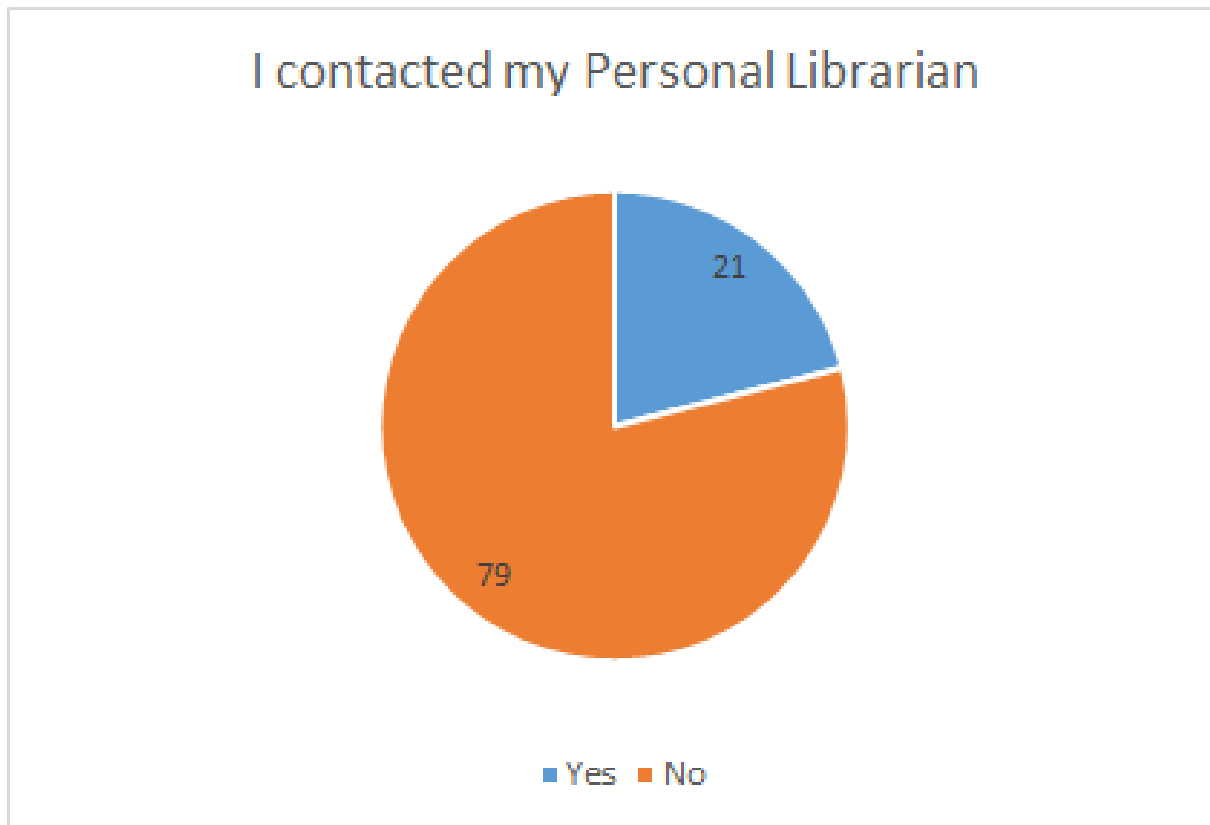
Book recommendations

What can the help desk do for me?

Workshops

Career resources

# Did you contact your Personal Librarian?



# Student responses

2014-15	2015-16
28	22

“Thank you for your support this year”

“I’d like to book an appointment”

“Can you let me know if we have access to the Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy?”

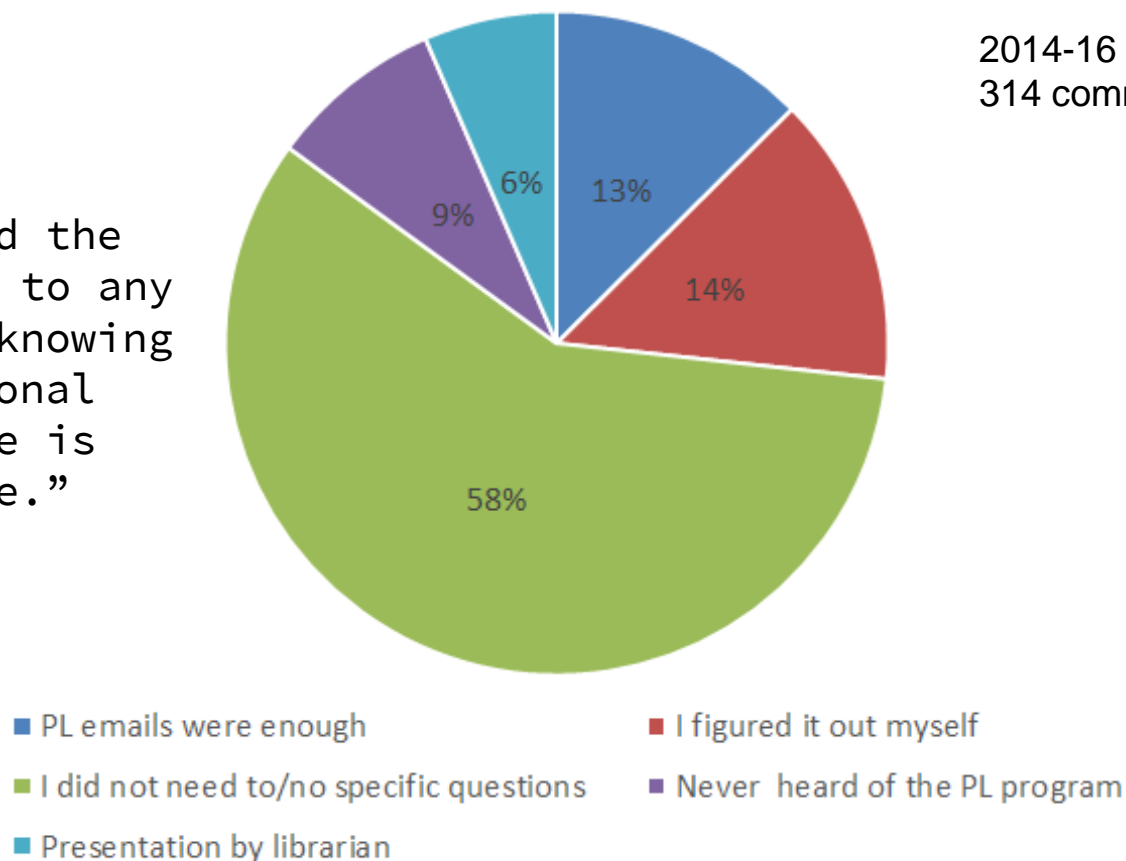


“[Amelia's Sad Face](#)” by [Donnie Ray Jones](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

“I haven't required the Library's services to any great extent, but knowing that I have a personal librarian available is incredibly positive.”

### Why didn't you contact your PL?

2014-16  
314 comments



# What else can numbers tell



Email marketing  
metrics: why?

Another facet of  
assessment

Provides  
benchmarks



# What is email marketing?

“... sending email messages with the purpose of **enhancing the relationship** of a merchant with its current or previous customers, to encourage **customer loyalty** and repeat business, [sic] and to **acquire new customers**

...

--[Wikipedia](#)

# Email marketing metrics

## **Opens:**

“Open” refers to an HTML email message whose viewing is recorded by a clear 1X1 pixel image. When a message is opened and images are enabled, the image calls the server and the message is then counted as an open.”

## **Clicks:**

“Measures the percentage of email messages that drew at least one click.”

# OPEN RATE

YEAR	BROCK	EDUCATION BENCHMARK
2014-15	20%	20.9%
2015-16	66%	27.2%

# CLICK RATE

YEAR	BROCK	EDUCATION BENCHMARK
2014-15	5%	2.9%
2015-16	4%	4.6%

Source: IBM Marketing Cloud. (2016). 2015 [Email marketing metrics benchmark study](#).

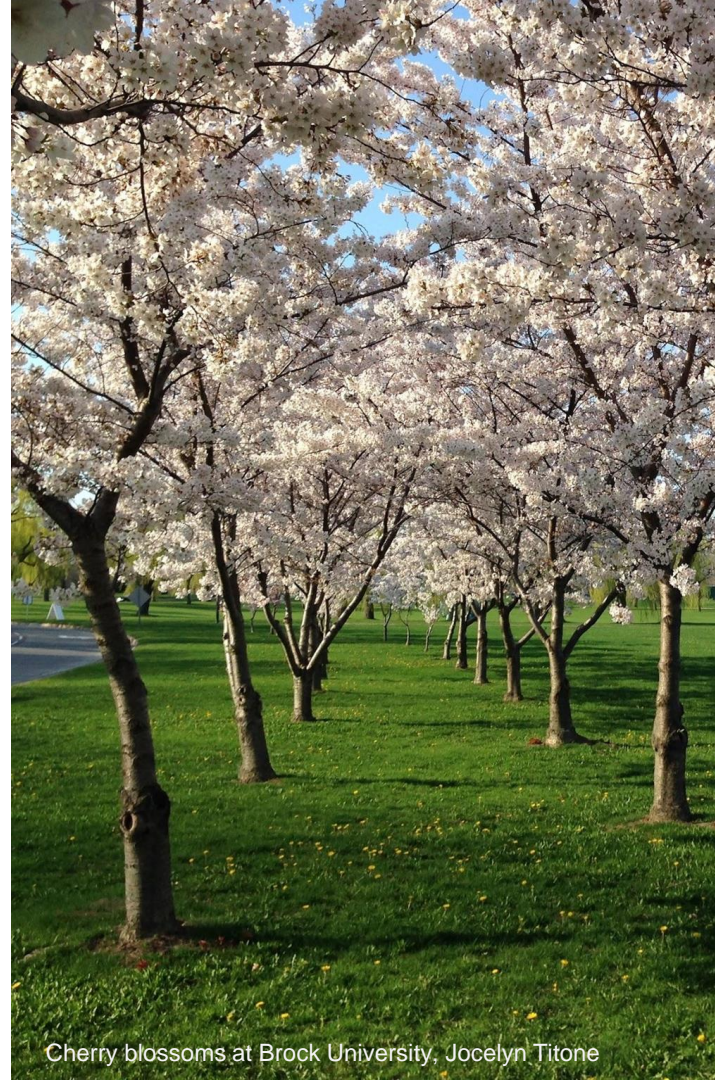
# Positive comments

“Very good program that should be kept to continue making students feel comfortable with the library staff as well as feeling confident in the library”

“I would say, it is best to have a personal librarian.”

“I think this is a great program, very useful for students and one that I hope to use in my future years at Brock!”

“It was fantastic.”



Cherry blossoms at Brock University, Jocelyn Titone

# Other comments

Some students wanted:

More frequent emails

More variety of help

More textbooks to rent

Separate emails for graduate students [we do!]

More interactive

Info that was more applicable to my area



Created by Alexandr Cherkinsky  
from Noun Project

# Issues and solutions

“I was unaware that I had a personal librarian”

“Didn’t even know that this was a thing to be honest”

Lack of direct student response

Clarify PL objective and role

More promotion?

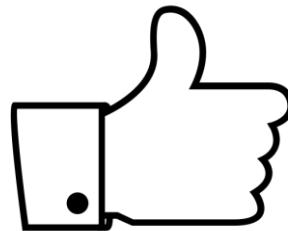
Expand program to specialized population groups



# Librarian feedback

Survey and discussion

How did it go? What can we do differently?



Created by Milky - Digital innovation  
from Noun Project

Thumbs up	Concerns
Pre-written messages by PL team	Messages too generic
Meeting to send messages together	Lack of direct student response
Great templates	Cumbersome email system
	Staffing challenges

# What about other PL programs?

Little published literature, even less focusing on assessment

Standard response rate is 10-15% (Yale, University of Toronto)

University of Alberta:

Personal Librarian Program for aboriginal students

58.6% open rate, 4% click rate

# What does it all mean?

Paints a picture:

Qualitative

Quantitative

Metrics

Comparisons

Overall, a success



Facepaint by Pascal  
Terjan

# Looking ahead



More empathy, interactivity

Correlation with student retention

Correlation between instruction and opens,  
clicks, replies?

Program-specific analysis

Targeting more specialized programs?

Wider coverage?

# Questions?

Jennifer Thiessen,  
Liaison/Accessibility  
Librarian –

[jthiessen@brocku.ca](mailto:jthiessen@brocku.ca)

Elizabeth Yates, Acting  
Head, Liaison Services

[eyates@brocku.ca](mailto:eyates@brocku.ca)

**brocklibrary1styearpersonallibrarian.  
wordpress.com**

Image: Ernie the emu, by bluegum. Freeimages.com

